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DATA ON RECOVERY OF HIGHWAY AND SHIPPING
INDUSTRIES OF CHINA, 1949-1952

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[This report presents some information on the recovery of highway and shipping industries in China between 1949 and 1952.]

Highway Transportation

In 1948, there were 75,000 kilometers of highways in China, 50,000 kilometers of which were damaged or destroyed by the retreating Nationalists.

Restoration of highways began immediately following the liberation, and by the end of 1949, within 6 months after the liberation, the length of highways had increased to 75,000 kilometers. In 1950 the length of the highways had increased to 102,800 kilometers, in 1951 to 107,400 kilometers, and in 1952 to 120,000 kilometers.

Besides repair work, new highways were constructed in various parts of China, especially in the area inhabited mostly by the minority nationality groups. During the past 3 years, a total of 11,000 kilometers of new highways have been built.

Restoration and development of the highway transportation industry were also begun soon after the liberation, and by the first half of 1952, of the total of more than 10,000 damaged motor vehicles left behind by the Nationalists, 3,500 were repaired and put into operation.

Immediately following the liberation, and with the blockading of the China coast by the imperialists, the shortage of petroleum products became extremely acute. However, with the help of the USSR, the problem was solved by converting gasoline engines for the use of charcoal gas. By the end of 1951, a total of 4,172 motor vehicles were converted for the use of charcoal gas, thereby saving 180 billion yuan's worth of gasoline annually.

The efficiency of the highway transportation industry was increased through the implementation of responsibility, management control, economic accounting systems, and the organization of labor forces. The operational cost of highway transportation began to decline by 1952. In Central-South China it declined by 11 percent, in East China it declined by 7 percent, and in North China it declined by 4 percent, all below the 1951 level.

According to incomplete statistics for the first half of 1952, the following achievements have been made by the highway transportation industry:

1. There were 1,572 automobile stations throughout China, 61 percent more than the total for 1950.

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2. Operational mileage increased to 119,597 kilometers, 1,180 percent more than the highest figure during the period of the Nationalist Government.

3. The transportation capacity of state-operated motor vehicles increased in 1951 by 75.5 percent over the total capacity for 1950, and increased again during the first half of 1952 by 26.8 percent over the corresponding period of 1951.

4. Vehicle-ton production in the first half of 1952 was 33.6 percent over a corresponding period under the Nationalist Government, and it was 19.9 percent over the corresponding period of 1950, and 2.5 percent over the corresponding period of 1951.

5. The number of motor vehicles in 1951 was 28 percent more than the total number of vehicles in any year under the Nationalist Government.

Shipping Transportation

China's important ports, harbors, and inland waterways, at the time of liberation, were so nearly silted up that without dredging and other improvements the restoration of shipping transportation was impossible. To help in the restoration, the government has been spending large sums in dredging and improving ports, harbors, and port facilities since liberation. The following achievements have been made during the past 3 years:

1. Dredging 11,300,000 cubic meters of river channel in Nanking harbor.
2. Deepening 20 or more shallow places in the Sungari River.
3. Widening the channel to the Chu Chiang from 50 to 100 meters, and deepening the channel to 3.8 meters.
4. Dredging 370,000 cubic meters of river channels in East China, and 740,000 cubic meters in North China.
5. Partial completion of construction of the Tang-ku Harbor.
6. Improvement of the navigational route of the Grand Canal.
7. Improvement of navigational lights and markers along the Sungari River and the Yangtze River.

Considerable attention was paid during the past 3 years to increasing the number of vessels. The most immediate project which had to be undertaken after the liberation was to salvage sunken ships, not only repairing them for use, but also to clear the navigation channels. In 1951, a state-operated salvage company was set up, which has so far salvaged more than 100 vessels. It is estimated that within one or 2 years, all salvage operations will be completed throughout China.

Much progress was also made during the past 3 years in the restoration of the shipbuilding industry. When the Nationalists retreated, they took with them more than 300 vessels, totaling 600,000 tons, and left behind damaged shipyards, such as the Kiangnan Shipyard and the P'u-tung Machinery and Shipbuilding Company. Both of these shipyards were restored immediately after the liberation, and in 1950, at the time of the liberation of the Chou-shan Islands, the Kiangnan Shipyard completed the repair of 40 mechanized junks in one month. The P'u-tung Machinery and Shipbuilding Company was also put back into operation immediately, and between May 1949 and June 1952, the company repaired 4,000 vessels of various types, totaling 2,162,000 tons.

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New China's shipping industry has not only won the battle against the blockading of the China coast by the Nationalists and their supporters, but has also made great progress in increasing the operational routes. During August 1950, the mouth of the Yangtze River was completely cleared of mines, and the Shanghai--Chin-huang-tao route, the first north-south route since liberation, was inaugurated.

During September 1951, shipping routes in South China was also restored, and in 1952, a total of 640,000 tons of cargo was transported over the routes in South China. At present, north of Foochow and along the South China coast, there are 36 newly opened shipping routes, totaling 10,000 miles, in operation.

The inland waterway transportation system was also improved considerably during the past 3 years. Before liberation, the route between Chungking and I-ch'ang required 4 days for travel upstream and 2 days for travel downstream; now it takes only 4 days to make a round trip. In the North-east, the travel time between Chia-mu-ssu and Fu-mien was reduced from 6 days per round trip to 3.6 days. By the end of 1949, in Central-South China alone, there were 174 routes, totaling 29,130 kilometers, in operation.

The entire inland waterway transportation system transported, in 1951, a total of 17,730,660 tons of freight, and in 1952, 30,668,013 tons.

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